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On the Alleged Introduction of Syphilis from the New World. Also some notes on the Local and Imported Diseases into America. By WM. BOLLAERT, F.A.S.L., Cor. Mem. Univ. Chile; of the Amer. Ethno. Soc.; of the Ethno. Soc., London, &c.

IN 1825, when at Buenos Ayres, and observing that both gonorrhœa or blennorrhagia, and syphilis * were very common among the white and mixed portion of the population, I made inquiries as to whether these diseases were met with among the Indians of that country. I was informed, as far as was known on this point, the Indians were free from them.

In the autumn of the same year I was weather-bound in Nassau Bay, just behind Cape Horn. The Indians there were nearly naked, a few only having a little piece of seal-skin over the shoulders; and although there were signs that foreign shipping (as sealers and whalers) had been thereabouts, I saw no indication of either disease.

The latter end of the year I arrived at the port of Valparaiso, where there are certain localities called "Tops," the residence of the prostitute population, frequented by sailors of all nations, and there could be no doubt that syphilis and gonorrhœa were rife. I then travelled about the central portion of Chile, but did not learn that the Peons, or labouring population (Mestizos) were afflicted with either disease. For some years I resided in Peru, and visited Bolivia, but heard of no cases amongst those Indians, who lived distant from the whites, mestizos, or mulattos. However, among the whites and mixed breeds the diseases were very common.

In coming from Peru to Chile by land, along the shores of the desert of Atacama in 1829-30, I met some Indian families known as Changos; I did not notice the disease amongst them. I went then among the Araucano Indians, and neither saw nor heard that they were so afflicted.

In 1831, I was for some weeks in the Straits of Magellan, and had good opportunities of examining both sexes, when I observed what appeared to me to be syphilitic sores (chancres) among some of the women, and gonorrhœa among some of the men. I had no doubt that they had contracted these diseases from the crews of sealers and whalers who visited this portion of the continent; and it was a well known fact that Indian women had often been stolen away by said

* A medical friend gives me the following. "The true etymology of many of the words used in describing some of the forms of venereal disease is somewhat obscure, e.g. the origin of the word *syphilis* is uncertain; but I venture to suggest, under correction, that it might be derived from the Greek word *συθαπ*—a slough, or cast-off skin, also the wrinkled skin of an old man (or from *σιφλος*, unclean). If this be so, it points to the constitutional nature of the malady. *Chancre* is from the French, which in turn is from the Greek *καρκινος*, or cancer, alluding to the primary and external disease. *Blennorrhagia* is from *βλεννα*, mucus, and *ρην*, to flow. *Gonorrhœa* is from *γονη*, semen, and *ρην*, to flow, and I should suspect has, in its pure sense, a reference to gleet, in the chronic form of the poison."

whalers and sealers, kept on board for a time, when doubtless the diseases had been communicated to them by Europeans.

In 1840-2, when in Texas, I visited many tribes of Indians of that country, as well as remnants of tribes which had fled from the United States, but observed neither disease among them. In 1854-5 I was again in South America, and neither saw nor heard of the disease among the pure Indians. Whilst amongst the white people and mixed breeds, particularly in the cities and larger towns, syphilis and gonorrhœa were very common.

So far my own experience as regards South and a portion of North America.

I will now briefly allude to some historical accounts on this subject, particularly as regards the Old World. In the Aphorisms of Hippocrates, 400 B.C., and in the Sentences of Celsus, 400 years after Hippocrates, as found in Sprengell's translations, in 1708. When Sprengell alludes to his own added Aphorisms "On the French disease," he says, it was just known to former more temperate ages, and, in a note, how far it was known in former ages, he refers to *Ecclesiasticus*, c. 19, v. 2, 3. Hippocrates, III.; *Epidemics*, iii., 41, 74, 59, and i. *De Morbus Mulierum*, 127. Galen, lib. iv.; *Meth.* c. 5, and lib. i. *De Gener.*, c. 23; lib. iii. *Epidemics*, sec. 3, com. 25. Pliny *His. Nat.*, lib. 26, c. i. Avicenna, lib. 2. Valesius; Rhodius; Vigornius, *Lib. de Morb. Gall.*, c. &c. And that it does not, according to the vulgar opinion, derive its origin from Naples, France, East or West Indies. Josephus, c. xi., p. 108, says, when on the subject of purification, that Moses ordered those who had gonorrhœa should not come into the city.

We hear of syphilis, or that it began to be very prevalent or made public in Europe in the latter years of the fifteenth century. The idea has been thrown out in our own time that it might have been long previously known in a milder form. It is said there was ground for believing that syphilis was brought into western Europe on the return of the crusaders. There were seven crusades to the Holy Land from 1099 to the reign of Edward I, about 1272.

In Dr. Simpson's valuable *Memoir* regarding the appearance of syphilis in Scotland, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (see *Trans. Epidemiological Soc. London*, 1862) he alludes to Peter Pinctor's assertion that syphilis was well known in 1483. Now, if this were so, added to what we know about a contagious disease known in very early times as the *Morbus Mulierum*, then the bringing of the disease from America on the return of Columbus in his first voyage, which was in March, 1493, just ten years after the period mentioned by Peter Pinctor, must I think be given up by those who have merely supposed that syphilis was originally brought from the New World by the Spanish discoverers.

Fulgosi, in his Gruner's *Aphrodisiacus*, p. 115, gives 1492 as the date of its general appearance in Europe, which is a year before the discovery of the New World. It was, about 1493, generally thought that the diseases had sprung up spontaneously and endemically in Italy, France, and Spain. If, however, in 1494-5, it was distinctly

recognised in Italy during the invasion of that country by Charles VIII of France, which was scarcely two years after Columbus returned from his first voyage from the West Indies. Charles VIII returned to France in May, 1495, and syphilis, it is mentioned, was generally disseminated on the march home by his troops, composed of his own people, Swiss, German, and Flemish auxiliaries.

I will now refer to Irving's *Life of Columbus*, composed from the very best materials. At vol. 1, p. 103, when describing the Indians of Hispanola in his first voyage, Columbus says, "they are contented with such simple diet, whereby health is preserved *and disease avoided.*" Columbus brought six Indians with him to Europe, where he arrived in March, 1493, but nothing is mentioned as to their being in any way diseased. He left Spain on his second voyage in September, 1493, arriving at the fort of Navidad, where he had left a small party of Spaniards with orders to be kind to the Indians and ingratiate themselves with them. The reverse took place; many of the Spaniards were of the lowest sort and of most sensual character. They stole away Indian women, forcing them to live with them in the fort; this so irritated the Indians that the fort was besieged and attacked, and all the Spaniards were most probably got rid of.*

Columbus abandoned this locality and proceeded to found the city of Isabella, when his followers suffered much from the climate and fevers; this was in March, 1494, for which period Irving observes that many Spaniards suffered also under the torments of a disease hitherto unknown to them, the scourge *as was supposed* of their licentious intercourse with the Indian females; but the origin of which, whether American or European, has been a subject of great dispute." Here we have but a *supposition*, and my firm impression is, that had either of the diseases been known to the Indians, the Spaniards, who were very good chroniclers, would have given some details. We now come to the latter part of 1494, when Pedro Margarite and others ran away from Isabella to Spain. "Some ascribed his abrupt departure to the fear of a severe military investigation of his conduct;

* I will here advert to a singular story, told me lately by Herr —, consul for a foreign power to Mexico, as connected with a friend of his, who died at Orizaba. His friend had exposed himself to contagion with a Quarterona. A few hours afterwards the member began to swell, causing excruciating pain; at the extremity there was a crown or ruff of various colours. Herr — went for a doctor, who, on examining the patient, said that he must have been with the said Quarterona, who had communicated the same to three or four others, and they had died; that it was his opinion that his present patient would share the same fate—the individual did die in a few days. The Quarterona was arrested and sent to a house of incurables; as to her fate there is no information. Herr — informed me that this class of venereal is called the *cristalina*, or crystallised syphilis; that a few similar cases had occurred in the city of Mexico; and that something of the sort had formerly been known in Cadiz. He also gave me the following as the supposed origin of this *cristalina*. In 1493, Columbus, ere he left the West Indies to bring to Europe the news of his discovery of the New World, erected the fort of Navidad in Hispanola, leaving some of his followers there. On his return from Spain, he found that the whole of them had been killed or had died. It is said that some of them were affected with syphilis brought from Spain, and gave the disease to the Indian women with whom they had lived, and from these sprung the *cristalina*, which I think to be very doubtful.

others to his having, in the course of his licentious amours, contracted a malady at that time new and unknown (?), and which he attributed to the climate, and hoped to cure it by medical assistance in Spain."

Let us suppose that Margarite was afflicted with syphilis, there is no evidence that he had contracted it from the Indian female as a disease natural to the country. If he took the disease from an Indian woman, she had, in all probability, been inoculated by a diseased Spaniard; but it is far more probable, if he had syphilis, that he had contracted it in Europe, or from some of his own countrywomen in the colony.

We come now to 1497, when an edict was issued about syphilis at Aberdeen as a disease that came out of France and other strange parts. It was also called the sickness of Naples, the gor, gore, and grangore, a contagious plague afflicting male and female. The terms gore and grangore are of French origin, as—*verole*, small pox, *grande verole*, large pox or syphilis.*

In 1500 we find syphilis called in Scotland pokes and Spanyie pockis; but it was generally denominated the French disease. Italians, Germans, and English spoke of it as the disease of Naples. The Dutch, Flemings, Portuguese, and Moors as the Spanish malady; and the Spaniards to this day call it Galico or French disease; but we never hear it quoted as the American disease.

Gonorrhœa was in full vigour in London in 1430, and known as clap or brenning, and its existence spoken of a century earlier. in the time of Richard II.

There can be no doubt that syphilis existed extensively at Naples, and was brought into Western Europe with the return of Charles VIII from that country in May 1495. I may here observe that when Columbus returned to Europe from the New World in May 1493, there is no allusion at that date that syphilis was brought from America. When Sir. R. Alcock was asked by a friend of mine as to the existence of syphilis in Japan, he said it was known as the Portuguese disease, and was common there.

However, as regards the New World, history gives no evidence as to the disease having been brought from there, and the non-existence of both of the diseases amongst those Indians at the present time removed from proximity to the whites and mixed breeds is, to me, a still more convincing proof that syphilis, as it has been well known before and since the end of the 15th century, is not of New World origin.

Benzoni, who was very early in the West Indies and in Peru with Pizarro, speaks of the *Morbus Gallicus*, or French disease. Solazano, *Monarquía Indiana*, lib. i, c. 4, p. 24, says it is most doubtful and uncertain that the venereal disease was introduced from the Old

* See *Des Divinités Génératrices ou du culte du Phallus*, par J. A. D., Paris, 1805, p. 291. "On nommait au 15ème siècle, les courtisanes élégantes, gores (gore, a sow), gaures ou gaurières, et les robes decoltées (low-bodied dresses), robes à la grante gore; c'est pourquoi un prédicateur célèbre par ses buffonneries, frère Maillard, s'écrie souvent contre les bourgeoises qui portent des robes à la grant gore."

World into the New. He calls syphilis "the French or Bubatic." Frezier in 1719-14, in alluding to the hospitals in Lima, mentions San Lazaro for the cure of lepers and such as have venereal distemper.

About 1742, the Ulloas, who were very close observers, being at Lima, thus allude to syphilis: "The venereal disease is equally common in Peru, as in those countries we have already mentioned" (they had just come from New Granada and Quito); "it is, indeed, general in all that part of America; and but little attention is given to it until arrived to a great height, the general custom in all those parts." As to the Indians, he says, i, p. 420: "Though the venereal disease is so common in the country (amongst the Spaniards and mixed breeds), it is seldom known among them (the Indians), and, when observed, has been communicated by the whites or Mestizoes."

Describing Quito, the Ulloas say: "The venereal disease is here so common, that few persons are free from it; and many are afflicted with it without any of its external symptoms. Even little children, incapable by their age of having contracted it actively, have been known to have been attacked in the same manner by it as persons who have acquired it by their debauchery. Accordingly, there is no reason for caution in concealing this distemper, its commonness effacing the disgrace that in other countries attends it. The principal cause of its prevalence is negligence in the cure. Few are salivated for it, or will undergo the trouble of a radical cure."

When first in South America, I was astonished to hear females say (sometimes rather in confidence) of any of their male acquaintances who complained of being unwell, there being no visible sign of illness—"pues es galiquente, y quizas de sus padres", he has been syphilised, perhaps, from his parents.

Velasco, in his excellent *Historia de Quito*, i, 185, says, when speaking of the Indians of that country, "Amongst other diseases, they are free from venereal, which is falsely attributed to them, but brought to the country by the Europeans."

Speaking of the Creeks and Cherokees in the United States, Bartram, who wrote in 1790 (*Amer. Ethno. Soc. Trans.*, 43, 1853), observes that they have the venereal in some of its stages. In some places it is scarcely known, and in none rises to that virulency which we call small-pox, unless sometimes amongst the white traders, who themselves say, as well as the Indians, that it might be eradicated if the white traders did not carry it with them to the natives when they return with their merchandize; these contract the disorder before they set off, and it generally becomes virulent by the time they arrive, when they apply to the Indian doctors to get themselves cured. "I am inclined," says Bartram, "to believe that this disease originated in America (?) from the variety of remedies found among the Indians, all of which are vegetable. I have imagined that the disease is more prevalent as well as more malignant among the northern tribes, because of their closer proximity to the whites. The vegetables are, various species of iris, croton, or styllingra or the yaw-weed, smilax, bigonia, and lobelia syphilitica."

In Wilcocke's *Buenos Ayres*, p. 412: "The syphilitic disease,

though very common amongst the inhabitants of the Spanish race, is seldom known among the Indians, and then only when communicated by the foreigner."

Stevenson, in his *Travels in South America*, i, 405, remarks: "With what certainty the origin of syphilis has been traced to America, I know not; but the wild tribes of Arauco (Chile), Archidona and the Napo (Peru), those of Darien (New Granada), and several others, as well as those who live in small settlements among the Spaniards, are totally unacquainted with it; and, although I have been particularly inquisitive on this head, I never could hear of a solitary instance of the disease, except in large towns and cities, and then it was limited to a certain class (prostitutes), where it was likely to be most prevalent."

I now come to a recent writer on subjects connected with the New World, who has again brought the subject of the existence of syphilis in America to our notice, and that it existed there at an ancient date.

In vol. i, p. 181, *Hist. des Nations Civilisées du Mexique*, par l'Abbé B. de Bourbourg, in detailing the legend of the deification of Nanhauatl, he says: "He is there with the others, but he is sick, he suffers from a terrible and incurable disease; there is nothing now to attach him to life, the joys of which he has drained . . . he throws himself into the flames, and is instantly burnt to ashes." In a note it is stated, "that the disease above mentioned was the *American syphilis*, which is somewhat different from that of Europe. Original and numerous documents, in the languages of those countries, have proved to us convincingly the existence of this disease in America before its discovery by Columbus."

Upon so important a subject, I should have thought that reference would have been made to these "original and numerous documents"; for without them, that the sickness of Nanhauatl was the "American syphilis", may be very much questioned.

At p. 182 of the same work, the abbé says: "Strange aberration of the human mind! That which was most revolting concerning this deity, the most revolting of matter, to be clothed so mysteriously; the symbols of grandeur and majesty, and the words which express the most infectious corruption of the human body, has even to this day, among a multitude of Indian nations, an analogous state, as that of the most elevated power." This is a most extraordinary paragraph. Had it had to do with phallic worship, we might have understood the affair. However, in a note, a far more extraordinary position of things appears; it is as follows: "In all the Spanish translations of the history of Nanhauatl, he is continually called by the name of 'Buboso', which the abbé translates "syphilitic". This struck me as rather strange, and I have investigated what I believe to be the true meaning of the word buboso in this case; namely, that it merely comes from the Spanish word buba, a pustule, and that buboso has been applied to the syphilitic swellings in the glands known as buboes, but that this bubo of the aboriginal Mexican Indian was an ordinary pustule or tumour, and not syphilis. The abbé proceeds, having once persuaded himself that this buboso means syphilitic, "The word *puz*,

which signifies the foul and corrupted matter of this disease, in the tzendal and in the otzile, becomes a verb to signify the sacrifice, and especially that of human victims; it means, also, to enchant, to perform miracles, or prodigies. *Puz-nawcal*, means enchanter, the great and marvellous man, etc. *Galel-ahpop* is a princely title, and *galel-ya* is a syphilitic. *Xogahuah* means princess, and *tantel yoghuah* literally means, she made herself a princess, as well as 'exit ex ea syphilis'. *Tepeu* means great syphilis, or he who has a great deal of it; *gawal tepegal*, divine, or the greatest majesty." After this rather hyper-philological dissertation—to me of very little value—the abbé proceeds: "Or is it, that the Spanish ecclesiastics in their catechism, being ignorant of the origin of these words, employed them to express the most sacred things of our religion, in the Quiché and Cakchiquél?" It would take a volume to write all on such matters, so multiplied and varied are they. We have to apologise to our readers for this strange note; but the circumstances have appeared so curious to us, that we have thought it our duty to lay it before the eyes of the learned.*

In a paper by Professor Owen to the British Association, on the Andamans or Mincopies, long isolated from any other people, Dr. Jebb said: "I never met with any one of them affected with gonorrhœa, syphilis, intermittent fever, itch, piles, small-pox, goitre, or other disease."

In 1831, I became acquainted with Mr. Beale, a surgeon, who subsequently wrote the *History of the Sperm Whale*. At p. 375 of that work, he says, speaking of Tahiti: "But if Mars had afflicted them so sorely, Venus herself had been less kind than her consort; their intercourse with foreigners had left their diseases, that were depopulating the islands; men, women, and even little children in arms, were suffering from this worst of Pandora's gifts, for the cure or alleviation of which they possessed neither knowledge nor means." At the period I speak of, I had long communications with him on the subject of the depopulation of many of the islands in the South Seas;

* I have lately had the subject of phallic worship in the New World brought to my notice. My impression had been that it was unknown to the Red Man. However, in a work entitled "*Des Divinités Génératrices ou du culte du Phallus*", already alluded to, it is mentioned as existing, "dans quelques parties de l'Amérique. Lorsque les Espagnols firent la découverte de cette partie du monde, ils trouvèrent ce culte établi chez les Mexicains." I find that this information is obtained from a work written by a gentleman who was with Cortes, who says: "In certain countries, particularly at Panuco, on the northern coast of Mexico, the Phallus is worshipped (il membro che portano fra la gambe), and they keep in their temples."

The Abbé B. de Bourbourg supposes the Phallic worship to have existed among the Allighewas, Algonquins, and Iroquois; and there is good reason to believe that something connected with this worship has lately been observed among the Mandans. As far as I have at present examined this matter as regards South America, I have not as yet made out the existence of this worship there. Some of the older Spanish writers on the New World speak occasionally of the reported commission of unnatural crimes by the Indians, but about which the evidence is not at all clear. I have seen a few examples of indecent execution in pottery from South America, but of a natural character only.

when he gave me a copy of his pamphlet on the matter, in which he positively states that the diseases had been communicated to the islanders by the whalers and sealers; and he proposed to the philanthropists of his day to send to the said islands a number of young medical men to do their best to cure or arrest these dreadful scourges; that these were the proper sort of men to improve the natives; that they (the surgeons) would explore the islands, make collections of natural history, to be sent home to our museums, and in this way repay in some measure the expense incurred. Mr. Beale's appeal was in vain. Missionaries only have been sent from England and the United States to the "heathen", but no medical men to cure the loathsome diseases contracted from the white man.

As a medical curiosity in connection with this subject, I translate from the *Mercurio Peruano*, No. 323, 6th February, 1794, published in Lima. It is headed, "Publication of a Receipt by Royal Order, with a Note by the Señor Oidor." "In publishing this receipt, we should give our most cordial and reverent gratitude to the King of Spain our Lord, who is not unmindful, amongst his heavy troubles, of having a care for the health of his happy and so tenderly beloved vassals. The receipt sent will be dear to us, seeing that the various experiments made are most satisfactory, so that the Sovereign has ordered it to be published in his remote dominions.—ROYAL ORDER.

"Excellent Señor,—I remit to Y. E., by order of the King, the accompanying receipt, used by the Honorary Commissary of War, Don Rafael Ramos, Comptroller of the Military Hospital of New Orleans; its advantages are well known for the cure of rheumatism, *venereal*, and scorbutics, so that the faculty of surgeons under Y. E.'s care may pay every attention to its use. God protect Y. E.—Palace, 22 July, 1793. Alange—to the Lord Viceroy of Peru.

"Instruction how to make the tincture:—Take 11 pints of good white wine, and macerate for three days; zarzaparrilla 3 oz.; holy wood 3 oz.; zarzafras 3 oz.; senna 4 oz.; harmodatil 3 oz.; tartar emetic 4 gr.; hearts of pino 1 oz."

"In the commencement, the tincture was only used in venereal cases, but it is now extended to scorbutic rheumatisms, humoral fluxion of the eyes, linfaticos oserosos in any portion of the body, to clean the kidneys, urethra, and bladder, or the impurities therein, taking away sand and even small calculi, useful in gout. Then venereal ulcers or gonorrhœa, exostosis (probably nodes), and other symptoms in the texture of the solid portions that have suffered, or have suffered alteration or disunion, the cure is not so rapid."

When I went to South America in 1825, a French quack medicine called *pantamagogo* was the rage; it was taken for every mortal disease, *venereal* included. I examined it, and it appeared to be a highly drastic tincture. With the arrival of European medical men, *pantamagogo* and some other quack rubbish were abandoned; still, many American and French patent medicines are patronised.

ON LOCAL AND IMPORTED DISEASES IN AMERICA.—*Mexico*.—Torquemada says in lib. vii., c. 29, to one of the deities were attributed diseases, as "small pox, swellings, abscesses, itch, and bad

eyes." As to small pox, there may possibly have been an indigenous variety; but that which has much assisted to thin off the red men, say from a hundred millions to ten or twelve millions, was the European. Las Casas calculated that, in the first forty years after the discovery of America, twelve to fifteen millions of the natives had been destroyed by the Spaniards, *i.e.*, by war and its results, and disease. As to the introduction of small-pox into the New World, it is on record that as early as 1520 Narvaez, who joined Cortez with his fleet, had with him a negro who had the disease. It spread rapidly in that part of Mexico, when numberless Indians fell victims. Maxiixa, the chief of Tlascalala, took it and died, as did also Cuitlahua, the successor of Montezuma. Prescott observes that the small-pox at that time "was sweeping over the land like fire over the prairies—the natives perished in heaps, and that the small-pox was *not* known before the arrival of the Spaniards." As early as 1515 this disease had begun to thin off the natives of the West Indies.

Pests, or epidemics, are spoken of by various authors as depopulating the country before and after the conquest. We know nothing of the symptoms of the visitations before the conquest. However, to this day, independent of the indigenous intermittent fevers in the some localities, there are bad bilious fevers on the Pacific coast, and yellow fevers running into black vomit on the Atlantic, particularly about Vera Cruz.

These intermittent, bilious, and yellow fevers are traced in a northerly direction along the coast of Texas into the Southern States of North America. I took the yellow fever at New Orleans, for which large doses of calomel were given. In Texas for intermittent fever, I took quinine in pretty large quantities and was bled; but to get rid of this last fever I had to seek a change of climate.

Texas.—In 1840-2 I explored a great portion of this country. On the coast, in the Autumn, the bilious would rapidly change into yellow fever, carrying off its victims. A hundred miles or more in the interior I have personally experienced bad intermittent fevers, but farther westward, and where the land is more elevated, the country is healthy. Indians of the interior going to the coast easily catch the fever.

B. de Bourbourg (ii. vol. of his *His. du Mexique*, 596) says, "about 1464, Mayapan, in Yucatan, was destroyed by civil wars. After a period of great abundance came a famine, when multitudes of animals died and putrified; this was succeeded by a peste or epidemic, which commenced the depopulation of the peninsula of Yucatan. And in vol. iii, p, 497, he speaks of Tlalocan, a sort of terrestrial paradise for those who had died by lightning, or drowned, the lepers, the syphilitics, the itchy, gouty, etc. The warriors who had died on the field of battle were taken up amongst the stars." As to the list of diseases, they are, I conceive, of Spanish origin, and not Indian.

New Granada.—What Ulloa wrote years since, applies in a great measure to the present time. The climate, particularly of the coast, is very hot with much rain. The complexion of the people is livid, and the young are mostly affected by disease.

The first disease is called Chapetonada (in allusion to the name of Chapeton given to the old Spaniards) and fatal to very many Europeans; the attack lasts three or four days, when the patient rallies or dies; this is the local yellow fever, and when in its most malignant state is the black vomit.

The residents are subject to leprosy, which is by some attributed to eating large quantities of pork. Lepers are allowed to marry, and in this way the disease is perpetuated. They are confined within certain limits, but allowed to go out begging.

The itch and tetter (a cutaneous disease) are common; an earth called maqumaqi is used as a remedy. There is a singular disease called coquilla, or little snake, it is a tumour of a bad sort. Spasms and convulsions are common, and oftentimes fatal.

At Porto Bello in particular, foreigners fall victims to the climate. It was a common opinion that parturition at Porto Bello was so dangerous among the European women that they generally died in child-bed; so that when three or four months in pregnancy they were sent to Panamá. European animals were so much affected by the climate that they scarcely bred. This Porto Bello has been and is still the hot bed of epidemics and mortal distempers with black vomit of a bad sort, and which made great havoc on one occasion, in 1726, to a British fleet.

Quito.—Malignant spotted fevers and pleurisies are common in this country, and when they present themselves, say in the capital, generally sweep away large numbers, indeed they are pestilential contagions. The mal de vicho was considered by Jussieu as gangrene of the rectum and not uncommon; those who laboured under flux were most liable to the malady. There is no canine madness in the city of Quito.

The people of this country are subject to a distemper unknown in Europe, and may be compared to the small-pox (?) which few or none escape; it is called *peste*, its symptoms are convulsions, a continual endeavour to bite, delirium, vomiting of blood and is oftentimes fatal. This peste is not peculiar to Quito, but has been observed in other parts of South America. At Guayaquil, the principal port, during the winter months, there is much intermittent fever, yellow fever occasionally. The natives are subject to diseases of the eye and cataract. The Indians very much dread the visitation of the European small-pox, which comes about every seven or eight years, when it makes very great havoc. They have also mal del bicho, or, as called by them, sickness of the valleys. Tabardillo, or spotted fever, they have also, and cure in a very rough manner. Of late, whooping-cough or Tos de perro, dog's-cough, and measles of a bad sort, imported I conceive, have afflicted the Indians in this region, as well as in the north of Peru.

Indians of the mountains in going to the coast catch tercianas, or intermittent fevers; those of the coast who go to the high lands, suffer from cold and get inflammation of the lungs.

Velasco, in his *Historia de Quito* (iii, 66), alludes to the epidemics or *pestes*. There was one that visited nearly the whole of South

America about the end of 1589. It commenced at Carthagena, travelling south to Quito; in the capital 30,000 died out of 80,000. It is of this that Helps (*Spanish Cong. in America*, iv, p. 84) adverts to and quotes Lozano, *His. of Paraguay*. The epidemic was first noticed in Carthagena in 1588, and it passed over all South America to the Straits of Magellan. It was much more fatal to the natives than the Spaniards. The Indian children were so struck down by the epidemic that not one out of a hundred escaped with life. The Indians offered no mental resistance to the ravages of this disease, which seems to have resembled the diphtheria of modern times. In Lozano's words: "Cerrabanseles las fauces de manera, que ni daban passo de lo interior al aliento, feneciendo la miserable vida entre las congojas del ahogo." Their throats became closed up, and in such a manner that no sustenance could pass, thus ending their miserable lives in the horrors of choking.

In 1645 Quito was visited by another peste called alformbrilla (St. Anthony's fire?) and garotilla (quinsey): 11,000 died of it in the city of Quito. Again, in 1759, there was another; of this Velasco, the historian, suffered. It was a sudden and violent fever, and severe head-ache, with the paleness of death, and great prostration; about one in a thousand of the Spaniards died of those who could obtain medical assistance, but 10,000 of the Indians who lived in the city perished. There was a fourth in 1785, a complication of diseases, including small-pox; in five months from 20 to 25,000 died of it in the city of Quito and its vicinity.

In 1560 Potosi was visited by a peste, many dying after only twenty-four hours illness. It appeared again the following year. In 1684 there were great droughts and a deadly plague in Peru. Ulloa ii, p. 91 94, *Voyages to South America*, has some curious observations on the "distempers" of Lima, which cannot in any way be congenial to health or the maintenance of a vigorous population even of the whites, to say nothing of some of the mixed breeds. The distempers most common to Lima are malignant, intermittent, and catarrhus fevers, pleurisies and constipations; and these rage continually in the city. The visitation of the small-pox in Quito as well as here is not annual, though when it prevails great numbers are swept off. Convulsions are common (unknown in Quito, but known in Carthagena) of the partial, malignant and arched, of which he gives a fearful account. Cancer in the womb is most common, most painful, very contagious, and almost incurable. Slow or hectic fevers are common in this country and likewise contagious.

Chile.—This is probably one of the best climates in America. However, the capital, situated at 1540 feet above the level of the sea, and under the great Andes, would be called by us rather severe, for in summer it is very hot during the day, and cold at night. It is subject to a malady known there as chavalongo, which is a putrid typhus fever, being very often fatal. It appears after the first autumnal rains and is caused by miasma. Tisis, or calentura, is not uncommon; when attacking the young it is called consumption, and older people, decline.

Brazil.—When I first visited the coast of this country in 1831 I

found it very hot, not unhealthy, but with occasional bilious fevers. However, some years afterwards yellow fever made its appearance, supposed to have come from the West Indies, and has continued at intervals. Cholera also visited Brazil.

The Guayanas and Venezuela have their share of intermittent, bilious, and occasionally a little yellow fever.

Climate.—The reason why great groups of humanity, as the whites, blacks, orientals, and red men of the New World enjoy general good health in their own country, is that each group has its own climate, and that their organisation is peculiarly fitted for the satisfactory assimilation of the air they breathe, the food they eat, and other personal arrangements. However, when the white man goes to the country of the black or oriental, he soon discovers they are not congenial to him, to say nothing of the local diseases new and oftentimes fatal to him. Take the negro from his tropical lands to high northern or southern latitudes, he declines and dies before his time. Take the red man away from America, he soon pines, particularly in the climate of Europe; he is prone to European diseases, as small-pox, measles, hooping-cough, etc.; he might do better in Polynesia and India on the score of climate, but he must have no laborious occupation. Then what is the conclusion we are to arrive at? Namely, that each great section of mankind thrives only in their own particular climate; take them to another and the result is unsatisfactory.

IDIOTCY AMONG INDIANS.—I do not recollect having ever seen or heard of idiocy or insanity among the Indians, either in North or South America. There is, on the other hand, idiocy among the white descendants of the conquerors, and in some cities more than others, insanity is observed.

Mr. Reddie stated in his paper to this Society on *Anthropological Desiderata*, read in February last, that idiocy was unknown among the negroes of Africa.

The PRESIDENT, in proposing the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Bollaert, observed that the subject of the paper was one of great importance. It was Mr. Bollaert's opinion that there was no trustworthy evidence to prove that syphilis had been introduced into Europe from the New World. For his own part, he was not satisfied with the evidence brought forward, and he thought that further evidence ought to be sought for and adduced, not only with regard to the introduction of syphilis but to some other contagious diseases. The question was not to be settled by the authorities of ancient writers, but he conceived that much light might be thrown on it by archæological discoveries. In no ancient skull that he was aware of had there been found any trace of syphilis, but it was easily discoverable in many modern skulls, the bone of the skull or the teeth being more or less affected by the disease. The question appeared to be in a very unsatisfactory state. They could form no judgment respecting it from the statements of old authors that had been brought forward, and he thought they must leave the matter to be elucidated by further discovery. They might, perhaps, arrive at some satisfactory result by the examination of an-

cient skulls, for if marks of the disease could be found on skulls of persons who died before the discovery of America, such evidence would be conclusive. In the examination of most modern skulls of soldiers it had been ascertained that there was scarcely one skull of men who died in the army that was not affected by syphilis, and some were in a frightful state. Even some of the beautifully white prepared skulls on the table, which had been presented to the Society by Professor Hyrtl, showed marks of the disease. The President inquired whether any member then present knew of any ancient skull that had indications of syphilis.

Mr. CARTER BLAKE stated that about two years ago a skull was submitted to him, which was absurdly alleged to be the skull of Richard III, but it proved to be the skull of a female, and exhibited symptoms of having been affected with syphilis. The skull was said to have been associated with bones of the extinct *Bos primigenius*, but that sort of evidence was of a very doubtful kind. That was the only skull of reputed antiquity in which he had observed traces of syphilis.

Mr. St. CLAIR observed, in reference to the contradictory statements of the origin of the disease—Europeans and Americans reciprocally asserting that it was derived from the other—that it might probably have sprung from the mixture of people very dissimilar to each other. If that were so, the contradictory evidence mentioned in the paper might be reconciled; otherwise it seemed impossible to understand how those contradictory reports could have arisen.

Mr. PIKE said there was one hypothesis of the origin of the disease which had not been suggested. It was well known that the alchemists of the middle ages introduced mercurial remedies in medical practice as cures for many diseases. Basil Valentine was one of those who had introduced such remedies. It seemed very possible, therefore, that the severe symptoms of syphilis which became known about the period of the discovery of the New World might have resulted from the application of those strong remedies. Persons afflicted with the disease aggravated by that mode of treatment, might attribute it to importation from America; the disease being in fact generated by uncleanly habits and by the use of mercury combined. Typhus was said to have been generated in a similar manner, and to have been afterwards communicated; and he thought that syphilis might have originated and been communicated in the same way.

Dr. TURLE thought that few medical men would adopt the idea that the application of mercury could have been the cause of syphilis. There could be no doubt, indeed, that mercury greatly aggravated the symptoms, but it could not have produced them. There was unquestionably a greater preponderance of the disease in modern times than in former periods, which would to some degree countenance the opinion that it had been introduced from America; but he thought it could scarcely be doubted that it existed in Europe before the discovery of the New World.

Sir CHARLES NICHOLSON noticed the supposed traditions among the Indians which it was conceived indicated the existence of the disease among them. As regarded the Mexicans, it might be observed

that as they possessed no written language, no importance could be attached to any such statement respecting them. It was asserted that they practised phallic worship, and that that worship was connected with the disease of syphilis. He was not aware, however, that there was any evidence to prove the existence of phallic worship among the Indians of South America. One argument in support of the opinion that the disease first assumed a specific character at the end of the 15th century was, that no indication of it was to be found in the literature of the East, which it might be assumed would have been the case had the disease been known. The phallic worship among the Hindoos was not of the sensual character commonly supposed. It was connected with profound philosophy, and really meant nothing sensual, but was symbolic of the great generative powers of Nature. He thought that if syphilis had existed among the Hindoos it would have been symbolised in their works, which gave minute particulars of every subject. So far as he was aware, there was no description in their writings before the period of the discovery of America, to indicate clearly any knowledge of the disease. With respect to Australia, he said, it had made frightful havoc in that country, and the rapid disappearance of the native inhabitants had been attributed partly to that cause. With regard, however, to the extinction of aboriginal races, he observed that there was another cause in operation which tended more effectually to produce that effect. The women were generally less numerous than the men; that was particularly the case among all the islands of the South Pacific, and in all parts of the world so circumstanced the original races were dying out and would soon become extinct. The real cause of it is, that where there is a great disparity of the sexes, and the women are much less numerous than the men, virtual prostitution exists, and the consequences are unfertility and extinction of race.

Mr. WITT said he could not perceive much connection between phallic worship and syphilis; but the existence of that worship in South America and in Central America he thought was proved by Count de Walder, who gave details of its practice there and representations of phallic images.

M. BOLLAERT mentioned that there is a disease peculiar to Quito, and that idiotcy is not known among the aboriginal races of North or of South America.

Mr. REDDIE inquired what evidence there was of the non-existence of idiotcy among the Indians of America. If that were proved to be the case, he thought it possible that the absence of idiots might be accounted for by supposing that the infants were destroyed when idiotic. That was the practice among the Greeks, or at least, was recommended by them. The facts on the subject were very meagre.

Mr. BOLLAERT stated, in reply, that he was not aware that the Indians destroyed any of their children.

Dr. TURLE asked whether any true case of plague had been known in South America.

Mr. BOLLAERT said he thought not.